

Saint Paul Messenger

A Member of the North American Lutheran Church

February 2017

St Paul Lutheran Church

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In January we have been talking a lot about the “aha” moments of the Epiphany Season, the ones people in scripture experienced and the ones we personally have had. The lectionary readings for Epiphany take us from the beginning of Christ’s ministry on earth to The Transfiguration of Our Lord. Picking up where John left off, Jesus’ ministry starts with Him echoing John’s message, “Repent for the kingdom of God is near”. Throughout the Epiphany season Jesus then reveals himself to us as the Son of God and displays his divine authority and power. He heals the sick, calls 12 men to be his closest friends and disciples, He teaches in the synagogues and countryside. Great crowds come out to hear him teach about the kingdom of God, and many more are healed, he feeds them, and many come to believe in Him. His teaching and actions reveal how distorted God’s original simple message to the Jews had become and yet they carry the promise that God has not forgotten them. These are the readings that will carry us to the end of February.

The Epiphany season ends with the Transfiguration of Our Lord. This dramatic event marks a major turning point in the gospel narratives, for Jesus was beginning to turn more and more to Jerusalem and the suffering and death that awaited Him there. But before all of that would take place, there was this glimpse of glory.

Between The Transfiguration of Our Lord and Ash Wednesday there is a day of preparation for Lent known as Shrove Tuesday, Pancake Tuesday, or Mardi Gras. The expression “Shrove Tuesday” comes from the word “shrive”, meaning “absolve”. Shrove Tuesday is observed by many Christians, who “make a special point of self-examination, of considering what wrongs they need to repent, and what amendments of life or areas of spiritual growth they especially need to ask God’s help in dealing with.” The term *Mardi Gras* is French for “Fat Tuesday”, referring to the practice of the last night of eating richer, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday. I am not sure if the rich foods or the “sugar high” experienced from eating them are behind all the Mardi Gras parades but I do know that they are the last big parties until we celebrate Easter.

When you think about all this, the dark days of winter we experience in Michigan actually have some pretty neat stuff going for them.

Epiphany Season – until Sunday, February 19th

The Transfiguration – Sunday, February 26th

Shrove Tuesday – Tuesday, February 28th

Ash Wednesday – Wednesday, March 1st



The President's Pen

To St. Paul Members and friends:

God's blessing to you all! We're almost into the month of February and that is good news because the winter weather and cold are on the down side. We just need to see a bit more sunshine to reassure us that warmer temperatures are not that far away. Maybe Pastor & Lynette will bring some back with them.

Some topics for thought are:

- **Financial**

At St. Paul's Annual Congregational Meeting it was presented by Peg Booher that we were in the deficit for 2016 by some approximately 9,000.00 to budget. I have been asked if our budget is actually realistic to our expenses. The fact that all of the funds from our CD's had previously been withdrawn and that money put into the general account checkbook is why we are still able to pay our bills without difficulty. I believe that this year's budget is very realistic but in order to meet those requirements we need to think about trying to increase our giving. I understand that not everyone is able to do so, but if you are, please consider giving a little extra. We want our church to continue to do God's work and to minister to each of us.

- **Growth**

One of the questions that has been asked is, "how do we get new people to come to church"? We are very blessed to have a great pastor who emulates all of those things that people want to see in a God called leader. So it has to be more than just that. Do people today make church a priority in their lives? Our congregation is made up of very dedicated people but we are an older congregation. We need to find ways that will bring families with children into the church to help fill up the empty pews. If you have suggestions, please let me know.

- **Communication**

I am asking that if you are in a position that information is forthcoming to you, please make sure that you communicate with the pertinent individuals. Too many times issues get blown out of perspective because we don't share the information. It certainly doesn't hurt to tell more than one person if you are in question. I am always open to text messages or phone calls. Let's all work together!

Thank you to Ruth and Terese for filling in during Pastor's vacation.

Just remember of His promise: "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will meet all your needs according to My glorious riches.

Nothing in all creation will be able to separate you from My Love".

Deb

Council Corner

St. Paul Lutheran Council Meeting Minutes



January 15, 2017

Present: Deb Elliott, Jim Whitten, Peg Booher, Peg Walters, Don Waker, Steve Mishler, Dave Schlaack

Absent: Jim Reider, Pastor Turanski

Call to order by President Deb Elliott at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall

Opening Prayer: Deb Elliott

Congregational Comment: None

Agenda Additions: None

Secretary's Report:



Council Corner cont.

Motion to approve minutes of 12/18/16 meeting by Don Waker, 2nd Dave Schlaack. Approved.

Treasurer's Report:

December Income: \$4,797.00, Expenses \$4,968.10 Variance, \$-171.10

Dec. 31 Ckg Bal: \$21,719.35, Spec. Acct Bal. \$7,052.65.

Peg Booher advised that we received an \$83 refund of our Workman's Compensation premium.

In 2016, our expenses exceeded income, producing a deficit of \$8,955.96 for last year.

Motion to accept Treasurer's report by Don Waker, 2nd Dave Schlaack. Approved.

Pastor & Elders –Pastor is on vacation during January.

Worship and Music – Submitted verbally by Jim Whitten

We will be using the Blue book liturgy until Ash Wednesday, March 1, and then switch back to the Green book for Lent. The committee will meet when Pastor returns to plan our Lenten schedule.

Property: - See Old Business

Community Dinner –

The committee has proposed that excess funds in the Shepherd's Table special account be distributed as follows. \$1,350 to Ewart United Methodist for use in their ministry. St. Paul's corresponding share to Sears Food Pantry (\$675) and Love, INC (\$675). Also, \$300 to be transferred to St. Paul's

General Checking to help with utility costs. This allows the entire St. Paul seed money to remain in the Special Account. A motion to implement this proposal was made by Don Waker, 2nd by Dave Schlaack. Carried.

Call Committee: Verbal report by Deb Elliott.

Terese Whitten has been in contact with our prospective candidate. She will call a meeting of the committee to discuss the results.

Motion to accept Reports by Dave Schlaack, 2nd by Don Waker, carried.

Old Business:

Gutter replacement. Dave Schlaack explained that he expects to move forward with gutters when the weather improves. Peg Booher explained that the voucher for payment for the work needs to be submitted in proper form.

New Business:

Election of new Officers. Motion to re-elect the current officers was made by Don Waker, 2nd by Dave Schlaack, carried. Deb Elliott, President – Steve Mishler, Vice President – Jim Whitten, Secretary. Peg Booher will serve again as Treasurer, but will be a non-voting member of Council.

Call Committee new member. Peg Walter expressed her willingness to serve on the committee in place of Linda Ahlgren.

Correspondence:

We received a solicitation from Cedine Camp. Also, a request from NALC to send used hymnals and Bibles to an organization seeking worship materials for soldiers serving in the Middle East.



Council Corner cont.

Terese Whitten sent a letter noting that she wishes to receive no compensation for her duties as a Worship Leader and Preacher. In response, a motion made to establish the amount of \$75 plus mileage as our standard compensation for non-ordained Lay Leaders who act as supply clergy. Motion carried.

Suggestion Box:

Carol Roberts submitted a note expressing her suggestion that, in light of our budget deficit situation, that we reduce our guaranteed amount for Monthly Special Offering recipients from \$100 to \$50. No action was taken at this time but it was discussed that we should do more to promote voluntary giving to these groups, including inviting a representative to address the congregation or put up a bulletin board if they desire. Also, a reminder should be given to the congregation each week during the announcements at the end of service.

Meeting adjourned as 12:35 pm and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next scheduled meeting is February 19, 2017.

Submitted by Jim Whitten, Secretary



The **Special Offering** this month is the **Sears Food Pantry**. If you are considering a donation, they are in need of catsup, mustard, spaghetti, and feminine hygiene products. Your gifts are greatly appreciated and will be blessed during the service on February 19th before being delivered to the pantry.

New Address:

Mr. Lyle Swanson
Green Acres of Mt. Pleasant
1805 E. Remus Room 112
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

He currently does not have a phone but would love a card from you.



Who was Saint Valentine?

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were

discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first “valentine” greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor’s daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed “From your Valentine,” an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and—most importantly—romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Who is responsible for mission?

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, We have been asked by many people about the NALC’s strategy for mission, specifically our strategy for planting churches. They have heard us say that the NALC does not plant churches at the national level. This is a new strategy and vision for many people. The formation of this strategy change began several years ago after I read an analysis and study done on the topic of mission in different denominations.

A comparison of Lutheran denominations found that most of them (and other mainline denominations) established mission departments at the national level in the 1970s. They began to encourage congregations,

synods, and regional associations to collect mission money and send it to the national office. The purpose was to centralize the mission fund in one pot. The national office would then be responsible for planting churches, sending out missionaries, and supporting global projects. The role of the local congregation shifted from being engaged in mission to writing a check every month. This money was sent to a regional office, which often took a percentage, and then sent on to the mission office in the national headquarters.

What happened with that money? What did that system do? Because the national church was responsible for mission, most congregations made themselves responsible only for worship. This killed their capacity to multiply and plant other churches. And now we can see the outcome: Each of the mainline denominations (whether more conservative or liberal in theology) that employed that vision and strategy has dwindled. And they continue to dwindle. There is clearly something wrong with that mission strategy.

In the NALC, we are embracing a different strategy for mission. Rather than the national church being responsible for planting congregations, it is critical to put mission in the hands of congregations.

Mission funds *need* to be in the hands of congregations. Mission projects and strategy *need* to be in the hands of congregations. That is why we emphasize that the NALC is Mission Driven and Congregationally Focused.

Congregations are in the driver’s seat of planting churches. Rather than making one office responsible for mission, we make thousands of congregations in the mission field responsible for the propagation of the Gospel — and for the planting of churches. That is why we say the NALC does not plant churches from the national office. If planting churches is not done by congregations —

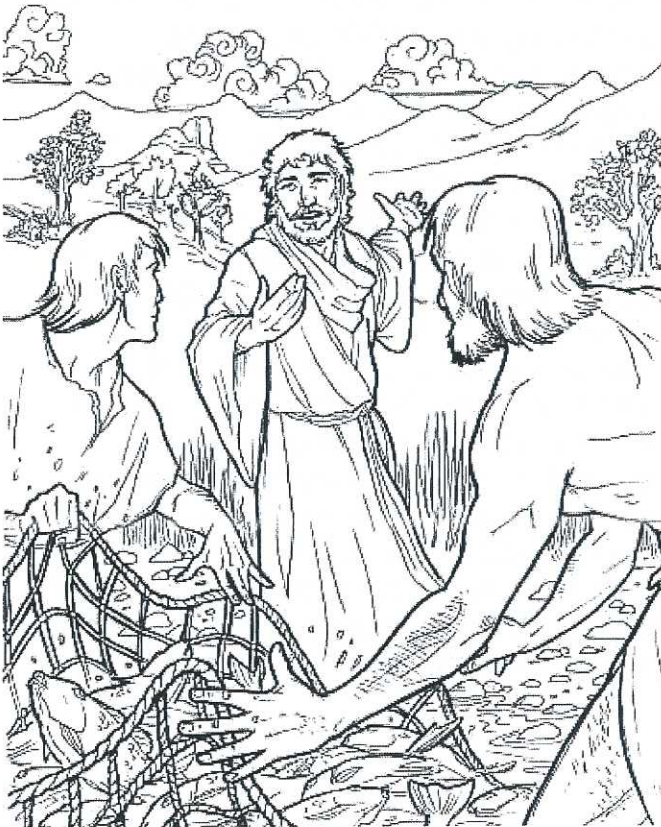
and specifically your congregation — it is not going to be done.

That's why responsible pastors and mission congregations work individually or collectively within their Mission Districts to make pastors, lay leaders and members responsible for the work of mission.

As we engage in this work of mission together, it is my joy to remind you of the words of Jesus in Matthew 16: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

As we engage in mission — whether church planting, evangelization or discipleship — we can be certain we will be attacked right and left. Our relationship with God and relationships with each other will be attacked. But the good news is that nothing will overcome the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ!

(This article has been excerpted from the December NALC News and was written by Pastor Gamechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions)



A Higher Call Men's Conference invites our congregation and its men to join them on March 11th in Gaylord for their "Rise Up: A Call to Courage" conference. It is their prayer that this event will bring all of us into a closer relationship with Christ. Before February 17th registration is \$25. For additional information see the community bulletin board.

From the Prayer List, those with continuing suffering in mind, body or spirit.

Linda Ahlgren, Carol Anderson, Margurite Armentrout, Wayne Bingaman, Henry Parker Cravens, Bob Green, Edna Greenfelder, Jo, David & Pastor Kelly, Dee Knox, Derek Leighter, Bill Larsen, Matt Mishler, Harold & Ruth Mowat, Lyle Swanson, Fern Thorburn, Bob Waker, Nathan Wells and Larry Whitten.